

Australian National University- APAC Accreditation assessment summary report

Higher education provider	Australian National University
Name of the Psychology AOU	Research School of Psychology
Standards version	Version 1.2, 1 January 2019
Purpose of assessment	Re-accreditation (5 yearly cycle)
Programs and level of study assessed	<p>Bachelor of Arts (Level 1)</p> <p>Bachelor of Science (Level 1)</p> <p>Bachelor of Science (Psychology) (Level 1)</p> <p>Bachelor of Philosophy (Honours) (packaged Level 1 and 2)</p> <p>Bachelor of Psychology (Honours) (packaged Level 1 and 2)</p> <p>Bachelor of Arts (Honours) (Level 2)</p> <p>Bachelor of Science (Honours) (Level 2)</p> <p>Bachelor of Science (Psychology) (Honours) (Level 2)</p> <p>Graduate Diploma of Professional Psychology (Level 2) <i>*exit degree only</i></p> <p>Master of Professional Psychology (packaged Level 2 and 3)</p> <p>Doctor of Philosophy (Clinical Psychology) (packaged Level 3 and 4)</p> <p>Master of Clinical Psychology (packaged Level 3 and 4)</p> <p>Program in teach out</p> <p>Doctor of Psychology (packaged Level 3 and 4) #</p> <p><i># Refer to the note on page 8 for further details</i></p>
Campus	Canberra
Date of site visit	9 - 12 August 2022

Date of APAC Board Determination	14 March 2023
Accreditation start date	1 January 2024
Accreditation end date	31 December 2028

Background and overview

The Australian National University's (ANU) suite of undergraduate Level 1 three year, packaged Level 1 and 2 four year, Level 2 fourth year and packaged Level 3 and 4 Clinical Masters, Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and Doctorate programs were last reviewed for re-accreditation by the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC) in 2017.

At the time of the 2017 review, the ANU's range of undergraduate and Honours programs delivered at the Canberra campus were accredited without conditions for a period of five years. The postgraduate programs were accredited subject to a condition for a shortened period as a shortfall was identified against the *Accreditation Standards*. Subsequent to the review, the outstanding condition was satisfied for the programs and the ANU's postgraduate programs have since been accredited without conditions.

In 2020, the Research School of Psychology (RSP) submitted an application for initial accreditation of the packaged Level 2 and 3 Master of Professional Psychology (MPP) program and the associated Level 2 exit degree, the Graduate Diploma of Professional psychology program, both offered on campus. At the time of the review, the Level 2 exit degree was accredited without conditions and the packaged Level 2 and 3 program, the first of its kind, was accredited with conditions as a small number of shortfalls were identified against the *Accreditation Standards*. Subsequent to the initial review, a virtual monitoring site visit was conducted in August 2021, after which all outstanding conditions were satisfied and the program has since been accredited without conditions.

The RSP is currently one of the four Schools situated within the College of Health and Medicine (CHM) and the RSP is led by the Research Director who reports directly to the Dean of CHM. Established in 2017, the CHM combines the RSP, Research School of Population Health (now the National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health), ANU Medical School, and John Curtin School of Medical Research. The ANU is undertaking significant organisational realignment and the RSP is in the final process of embarking on a merger with the ANU Medical School to form the School of Medicine and Psychology. It is anticipated that the integration of the new School will be finalised later in 2022.

The APAC Assessment Team considered the RSP's 133 page self-review, including attached appendices and a range of samples of student assessments against the *Accreditation Standards*. Following the Assessment Team conference held on 22 June 2022, subsequent information was requested and received from the ANU, including:

- an overview of the ANU Psychology Clinic outlining the clinic structure, supervisory oversight, client suitability, referral processes and clinical services
- the ANU e-Therapy Clinic (e-TC) overview and emergencies detailing e-TC service model and the processes for managing emergency situations with e-TC clients
- list of placement supervisors for the packaged Level 2 and 3 and packaged Level 3 and 4 Clinical Masters and PhD programs
- copies of the unit outlines for all units within the suite of psychology programs, including details of assessment requirements and marking rubrics

Prior to the virtual site visit, the Assessment Team was provided with a pre-recorded guided tour of the range of facilities at the ANU Psychology Clinic, including the reception space, Clinic Manager and supervisors' offices, intake office, client consultation rooms, dedicated child and family spaces, group therapy rooms, student shared office space and test library. Additionally, a comprehensive explanation of each area, noting the location of the video recording system, duress alarms, ways to ensuring sound proofing and associated clinic processes was also provided within the video tour.

The Assessment Team conducted a virtual site visit on 9 - 12 August 2022. During the virtual site visit, the Assessment Team interviewed a range of individuals via Zoom conferences, including:

- Director, RSP
- Dean, CHM
- Deputy Dean (Education)
- Associate Director of Education and Undergraduate Program Convenor
- Clinic Director
- Clinic staff
- Community partners, Australian Public Service and Canberra Health Services
- Equity and Inclusion Committee
- Honours and packaged Level 2 and 3 Program Convenor and packaged Level 3 and 4 Interim Program Convenor
- Undergraduate, Honours, packaged Level 2 and 3 and packaged Level 3 and 4 Course Convenors
- Honours, packaged Level 2 and 3 and packaged Level 3 and 4 sessional academics and associate supervisors
- Professional administrative staff members
- Undergraduate, Honours, packaged Level 2 and 3 and packaged Level 3 and 4 current students
- Undergraduate, Honours, packaged Level 2 and 3 and packaged Level 3 and 4 recent graduates
- packaged Level 2 and 3 placement supervisors
- packaged Level 3 and 4 external supervisors
- Placement Coordinator
- Psychology Clinic Manager

During the virtual site visit, the Assessment Team was provided with supplementary information, including a copy of the RSP Workload Model developed by the RSP Workload Committee in December 2016 and teaching activity calculations in the College of Science and CHM. In addition, a list of the thesis titles for research projects undertaken in 2019, 2020 and 2021, including names of research supervisors for the packaged Level 3 and 4 Clinical Masters and PhD programs, and clarification regarding the number of cognitive assessments that students are expected to complete, the extent to which there is formative and summative assessment as a precursor to the cognitive assessment and the remedial processes in place for students not acquiring competence was provided.

The findings in this report are based on the Assessment Team's evaluation of the material outlined above and interview evidence at the time of the virtual site visit, as well as additional information provided in the rejoinder to the draft report.

Key findings

The RSP places a profound importance on excellence in research and its long-standing history and continual striving for research excellence is a clear strength of the RSP. As part of the Australian Research Council's most recent *Excellence in Research for Australia* research excellence evaluations, the RSP was recognised for its achievement of the highest rating for research performance. The RSP delivers a range of high-quality, research-led undergraduate and postgraduate psychology programs and the programs are well served by an experienced and highly committed group of academic staff, many of whom have won both University and National teaching awards.

At the time of the virtual site visit, the Assessment Team learned that the RSP's imminent merger with the ANU Medical School promises to generate positive opportunities for both disciplines to work collaboratively to drive innovation and develop new models of health education and training, including enhancing inter-professional learning and interdisciplinary policy development. However, one of the significant challenges the RSP faces is to ensure Psychology maintains its distinctiveness and is sufficiently resourced to achieve strategic growth and to utilise opportunities for collaborations and partnerships within the wider community to enable new and innovative approaches to supporting, educating and training students. Further, the Assessment Team heard interview evidence confirming that, due to recent changes to the staffing profile, the current teaching resources, although well qualified and experienced, are stretched and there is insufficient professional staff support available. Therefore, any further increase to staff workload places further pressure in maintaining the quality of the programs and student experience. The Assessment Team acknowledges that recruitment is currently underway and further updates on the staffing profile will provide reassurance that the current recruitment has been successful.

The evidence gathered by the Assessment Team indicates that the Level 1, packaged Level 1 and 2 and Level 2 program offerings are well designed, established and coordinated. Academic governance processes are clear and robust, with good levels of student representation and students have ready access to support services and felt well supported in their learning. While the evidence indicates that almost all of the *Foundational Competencies* are sufficiently taught and appropriately assessed as required learning outcomes, the Assessment Team heard evidence that suggests that there is an over reliance on traditional types of assessment tools, such as the use of examinations within the Level 1 programs. Further, there appears to be a lack of moderation of assessments in third year 3000-level units and the Assessment Team agrees that these programs would benefit from the use of a wider range of assessment modes and internal moderation to ensure the improvement of assessment approaches.

It is evident that staff are dedicated, enthusiastic and work well with each other, have established good working relationships with the students and show commitment to continuous improvement. The Assessment Team was impressed with the RSP's strong team ethic, culture of collegiality and collaboration, and staff commitment to delivering the objectives of the programs. The RSP has demonstrated a strong focus and commitment towards training culturally aware and responsive graduates and there is clear evidence of integration of learning outcomes and assessments, particularly at the Level 2 and Level 3 components of the postgraduate offerings. However, for the Level 1 and Level 4 component of the packaged Level 3 and 4 programs, opportunities to strengthen and provide students with greater exposure and further training and development in cultural responsiveness were identified, particularly in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, both in content and assessment in education and practice.

The Assessment Team gathered evidence that indicates that overall, the professional programs provide students with the breadth of placement opportunities required to develop the required professional competencies expected to practice competently and safely. The structure of the programs ensures that students gain a good grounding in evidence-based research and practice, and is a clear strength of the RSP. It is evident that students are required to demonstrate that they have developed a diversity of skills across a broad range of settings, including service delivery to rural and remote areas and via e-TC, and students are well supported in the practice setting by appropriately qualified supervisors. There is strong support for the professional programs from external placement providers and evidence confirms that the RSP utilises a good range of stakeholders to inform program review and development. The RSP maintains strong partnerships with organisations in health, government and industry, and is commended for its constructive engagement and strong orientation to stakeholder collaboration and consultation in the provision of outstanding research-led teaching, research and placement experiences. Throughout the virtual site visit, the Assessment Team was impressed with the RSP's exemplary approach to the application of the principles of inter-professional learning and practice. The RSP is commended for its well-considered and robust admission processes into the packaged Level 2 and 3 program, and for maintaining a high-quality student experience and a genuine sense of care for student wellbeing and success.

APAC Board determination

That the following programs at the Australian National University are re-accredited until **31 December 2028**:

- **Bachelor of Arts** (Level 1) (Campus: Canberra)
- **Bachelor of Science** (Level 1) (Campus: Canberra)
- **Bachelor of Science (Psychology)** (Level 1) (Campus: Canberra)
- **Bachelor of Philosophy (Honours)** (packaged Level 1 and 2) (Campus: Canberra)
- **Bachelor of Psychology (Honours)** (packaged Level 1 and 2) (Campus: Canberra)
- **Bachelor of Arts (Honours)** (Level 2) (Campus: Canberra)
- **Bachelor of Science (Honours)** (Level 2) (Campus: Canberra)
- **Bachelor of Science (Psychology) (Honours)** (Level 2) (Campus: Canberra)
- **Graduate Diploma of Professional Psychology** (Level 2) (Campus: Canberra) **exit degree only*
- **Master of Professional Psychology** (packaged Level 2 and 3) (Campus: Canberra)
- **Doctor of Philosophy (Clinical Psychology)** (packaged Level 3 and 4) (Campus: Canberra)
- **Master of Clinical Psychology** (packaged Level 3 and 4) (Campus: Canberra)
- **Doctor of Psychology** (packaged Level 3 and 4) (Campus: Canberra) *#program in teach out*

the coursework and practicum component for this program in teach out was not assessed as part of the re-accreditation assessment as the RSP advised APAC that the remaining student in the program has successfully completed all coursework and practicum requirements.

Subject to the following conditions:

For all programs

By **28 April 2023**:

1. To ensure Standard 3 Program of study, criterion 3.4 is met, the School is to provide:

- i. evidence demonstrating that all programs have sufficient number of academic and professional staff to support the student cohort in acquiring the relevant graduate competencies, and
- ii. an update when the planned new appointments of academic teaching staff are made and when the appointees have commenced their roles.

For the Level 1, packaged Level 1 and 2, Level 2 and the Level 2 component of the packaged Level 2 and 3 programs

By **28 April 2023**:

1. To ensure Standard 5 Assessment, criteria 5.3 is met, the School is to provide evidence demonstrating the use of a wider range of assessment modes to assess program learning outcomes across each program level.
2. To ensure Standard 5 Assessment, criterion 5.4 is met, the School is to provide evidence demonstrating that internal moderation processes are undertaken and the findings are used to improve assessment approaches throughout the program.

For the Level 1, Level 1 component of the packaged Level 1 and 2 and the Level 4 component of the packaged Level 3 and 4 programs

By **30 June 2023**:

1. To ensure Standard 3 Program of study, criteria 3.2 and 3.8 and Standard 5 Assessment, criteria 5.1 and 5.2 are met, the School is to provide evidence of a range of student samples of assessment tasks demonstrating that the following competencies are integrated and clearly articulated as a learning outcome, taught and appropriately assessed:
 - i. *Foundational Competencies 1.2 and 1.5* for the Level 1 and Level 1 component of the packaged Level 1 and 2 programs (criteria 3.2, 5.1 and 5.2), and
 - ii. cultural responsiveness, including with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures for the Level 1, Level 1 component of the packaged Level 1 and 2 and the Level 4 component of the packaged Level 3 and 4 programs (criteria 3.8, 5.1 and 5.2).

As a monitoring requirement, the School is to provide:

1. an update on the progress and outcomes of the external benchmarking exercise to be provided as part of the 2023 and 2024 annual reports for all programs (criterion 2.2), and
2. once the merger is finalised, an update demonstrating that the new governance structure and operational arrangements are robust and administrative support and services are sufficient to ensure academic staff are able to fulfil their teaching and research

responsibilities as part of the 2023 and 2024 annual report, or when the information becomes available, whichever occurs sooner (criteria 2.1 and 2.5).

Table 1: Summary of findings regarding each criterion for each Standard

	Level 1	Level 1 & 2	Level 2	Level 2 & 3	Level 3 and 4 Clinical
Domain 1: Public safety	Standard Statement 1: Public safety is assured				
	Standard is met	Standard is met	Standard is met	Standard is met	Standard is met
Domain 2: Academic governance and quality assurance	Standard Statement 2: Academic governance and quality assurance processes are effective				
	Standard is met	Standard is met	Standard is met	Standard is met	Standard is met
Domain 3: Program of study	Standard Statement 3: Program of study, design, delivery and resourcing enable students to achieve the required graduate competencies				
	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially met
Domain 4: The student experience	Standard Statement 4: Students are provided with equitable and timely access to information and support				
	Standard is met	Standard is met	Standard is met	Standard is met	Standard is met
Domain 5: Assessment	Standard Statement 5: Assessment is fair, reliable and valid				
	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially met	Standard is substantially met

Quality improvement suggestions

A quality improvement suggestion refers to an action or a course of actions that should be considered by the education provider to improve the delivery and/or outcomes of the program.

The suggestions are as follows. It is recommended that the Research School of Psychology at the Australian National University:

1. explore a contemporary and digital approach to recording and managing placement information.
2. review and consider the undergraduate and Honours programs and how best to structure coursework content and assessments in a meaningful and integrated way.
3. consider the viability and sustainability of current academic staff workloads.
4. explore options to provide students with further information regarding career and pathway options following the completion of their undergraduate and Honours studies.
5. investigate strategies to maintain adequate resourcing, including clinic training facilities for the delivery of postgraduate programs, to allow for potential increases in future student intakes.

Commendations

A commendation refers to a particularly significant achievement by the education provider with regard to the program.

The Assessment Team have made the subsequent commendations following the evaluation of the program.

The Research School of Psychology at the Australian National University is commended for:

1. its strong team ethic, culture of collegiality and collaboration, and commitment to its programs and students.
2. its strong partnership and constructive engagement with a diverse range of industry partners and strong orientation to stakeholder collaboration and consultation in the provision of outstanding research-led teaching, research and placement experiences.
3. its well-considered and robust admission processes for the packaged Level 2 and 3 program.
4. the initiatives of the Equity and Diversity Committee and its working groups, the development and strong integration of content and assessment relating to cultural responsiveness, including with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and its outreach to the indigenous community.

5. an exemplary approach to the education and training of the application of the principles of inter-professional learning and practice throughout the professional programs.
6. maintaining a high-quality student experience and a genuine sense of care for student well-being and success.
7. its focus on providing mental health services to the community, especially in rural and remote areas via e-Health, as well as to ACT Health.
8. the leadership, commitment and drive displayed amongst academic staff, in particular the packaged Level 2 and 3 MPP Placement Coordinator and their significant contribution to contextualising the program and implementing the e-TC practices.